

The role of stakeholders in professional development of ECE teachers in Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Kenya does not receive direct government financial support as other sectors of education and therefore relies on a number of stakeholders for financial, human, physical and teaching/learning resources. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of stakeholders in professional development of ECE teachers in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate this. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 sub-counties which was approximately 30 % of the population. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select the participating ECE centres from the selected sub-counties. Thirty percent (30 %) of the public and private ECEs were sampled. Head teachers from each ECE participated in the study making a total of 62 and 122 head teachers from private and public ECE respectively. One teacher from the sampled ECE centres participated in the study. However where more than one teacher was found in an ECE centre, simple random sampling through balloting was used to select the one to participate. The DEOs and DICECE Officers of the selected sub-counties were selected purposively to participate in the study. The sample frame consisted of 184 head teachers, 184 teachers, 3 DEOs and 3 DICECE officers. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the ECE head teachers and teachers and interview schedules from the DEOs and DICECE officers. The instruments were validated through expert judgment and pilot-testing. Collected data was edited, organized in line with research questions, coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Findings were presented in frequency tables, charts and graphs. The findings of the study revealed that the sub-sector was dominated by females who are believed to be better in teaching children. The study further revealed that majority of the ECE teachers had met minimum qualification. The Ministry of education and parents were not keen on funding professional development of teachers and that individual teachers funded their own professional development. The study concluded that stakeholder's role in professional development of ECE teachers was minimal. The study recommended that the government should expand the scholarship programs to cover ECE pupils and teacher trainees.

Keywords: Early childhood education, professional development, stakeholders, services.

Introduction

The early years of a child's life are a time when it acquires concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perceptual motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy, problem solving skills, a love for learning and the establishment and maintenance of relationships Government of Uganda (2005). Early Childhood Education (ECE) therefore, is key to the development of the child's psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills. Republic of Kenya (2003) postulates that early childhood education programs play a crucial role in laying a foundation for primary and subsequent further education, and character formation. Nasibi (2005) notes that, a poor start leads to deficiency in the final product of the education system in spite of the length of time spent in the school. The Education For All Report (2007) confirms that children's success in life begins in the early years of childhood and investment in ECE has a direct and positive impact on primary school enrolment, retention and completion. Kenya

Education Sector support Program (2005) supports this statement by articulating that children who enroll in ECE programs get a good quality foundation and are less likely to drop out or repeat classes. Good quality ECDE both in the family and within a structured environment has a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children as echoed by UNESCO (2005b).

Early Childhood Education traces back to the early philosophers like Bloom, Plato, John Comenius, John Dewey, Pestalozzi, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Froebel and Maria Montessori whose contributions resulted in what is seen today as ECD Education (RoK, 2009). Comenius advanced the concept that early learning determines what a person will become and suggested that teachers should follow the order of nature, i.e. build on the formulation of spontaneous reaction and teach repeatedly one thing at a time (Nasibi, 2005). Froebel who is the founder of the concept of the kindergarten emphasized activity through play as a natural way of learning and that education should conform to the child's free atmosphere. He started training ECE teachers emphasizing the creation of play materials to help children learn better. He proposed that women were the best suited for teaching young children. Erikson, in his psychosocial development theory looks at the third stage of the eight psychosocial stages referred to as play age, pre-school or nursery as an important stage in an individuals' growth as it helps define his /her personality growth.

Early childhood education program in Kenya operates on the basis of partnership, collaboration and networking. The main stakeholders in ECE are the parents, the community and the private sector. Other partners are: Government of Kenya and its constituent ministries coordinated by Ministry of Education (MOE). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as , community-based organizations (CBOs), Faith-based organizations have been providing support to ECE as well as bilateral and multilateral partners including UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Bernard Van Leer Foundation (BVLf), World Bank, and UNESCO. The policy on partnerships aims at enhancing the involvement of various partners in the provision of ECE services (UNESCO, 2005a). The roles of these stakeholders and the coordination mechanism were defined in the National ECDE Policy Framework developed in 2005 by UNESCO in collaboration with the MoE and standard guidelines launched in 2007. The Ministry of Education on the other hand provides policy guidelines on capacity building of ECDE personnel, develops curriculum, supervises ECDE programs and registers ECE centres. Ministry of Education also trains and certifies ECE teachers and trainers and maintains standards and quality assurance. The NGOs and FBO have complemented the government's efforts by mobilizing resources, supporting capacity building for ECE programs and advocacy through community sensitization (UNESCO, 2005).

Bilateral and multilateral development partners have supported ECE programs through resource mobilization, capacity building, advocacy, technical support and funding ECE and ECDE programs through the ministry of Education. For instance the Community Support Grant from the World Bank has assisted improve infrastructure in ECE centres especially in marginalized and pockets of poverty areas impacting positively on participation and quality of services offered RoK,(2007). However, there could be no clear policy on financing and lack of coordinating mechanism to facilitate participation of stakeholders. This has resulted in diversity of practices by various stakeholders compromising the quality of service offered. The impact of involvement by all these stakeholders in ECE is unknown and how it has affected the growth and effectiveness of the program.

Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (2006) reports that the Kenya pre-school education programme encourages partnership at all levels. The government, parents, communities and the private sector (e.g. religious organizations, private companies, NGOs and individuals) are the main sources of ECDE finance and support. While the government allocates less than 1% of the education ministry's budget for preschool education, parents and the communities currently manage 75% of the preschools in the country. The largest source of external assistance in recent years has been the World Bank's ECD project loan of 1996/7-2003/4, targeting disadvantaged children aged 0+-8 and their parents (UNESCO, 2005). The project focused on teacher training and community capacity building for service delivery, stressing the importance of meeting children's nutritional and health needs as well as their learning needs.

Professional qualification of ECE teachers has a positive correlation with the quality of service at the ECE centres. The first priority for improving pedagogy at ECE Centres is teacher training. Teachers should learn how to make the ECE classroom environment more child-centred and child friendly (UNESCO, 2005). Training is important in preparing teachers for their work since it equips them with necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to perform their duties competently. Peter (2001) observes that, better educated pre-school teachers with specialized training are more effective. This requires that the stakeholders should fund the professional development of teachers. World Bank (1997) notes that pedagogical and practical skills in ECE are important for

the effectiveness of ECE teachers and their capacity to deliver a quality ECE program. The Republic of Kenya, (2006) recommended that ECE teachers and caretakers should possess professional qualifications of at least a certificate in ECE from a government institution or an institutions approved by the government. The government also stressed that ECE teachers and their trainers should acquire full knowledge of the multi-dimensional aspect of child development (UNESCO, 2005). This is an indication that training is paramount for ECE teachers and practitioners.

A study by Sifuna and Karagu (1988) found out that the teacher is a key determinant of service quality at pre-school. His/her effectiveness is determined by the qualification and training, supervision and support the teacher is given. Teachers with low grades experience difficulty in implementing National Centre for Early Childhood Education curriculum, especially in language development. This is because these teachers may have failed in this subject making it difficult for them to handle it. Ngome (2002) emphasized the training of teachers as this has a direct influence on knowledge, skills, and practices acquired by the teacher and passed on the ECE child. He also noted that the high attrition rate in ECD education is likely to affect quality of service provision. Ndegwa (2005) noted that qualified teachers were favorable to child centred teaching methodologies which were mainly emphasized during training.

The Education Africa ECD Project supports quarterly workshops for continued professional development of the ECE teachers South Africa. On-site training by ECD specialist is offered at all Education Africa ECD partner schools on a regular basis, as well as continuous assessment and mentorship. This ensures that what has been learnt at the workshops is implemented in the classroom. Following a 12-month period of training, caregivers are assessed and if successful, they are presented with Play-with-a-Purpose Certificates at a graduation ceremony (ADEA, 2009). Education Africa developed a project on ECD in Ghana aimed at assisting caregivers in impoverished communities who are tasked with looking after preschool children while their parents are at work. Many of these care givers had limited education and therefore no access to formal training. Education Africa ran a year-long series of workshops to assist them in ensuring that the children in their care acquire the necessary skills needed when entering the formal school system. On-site visits are also undertaken by ECD Specialist to ensure that the skills which the caregivers have learnt in the workshops are implemented in the classroom. From the reviewed literature, it is clear that the practitioners require prerequisite skills and knowledge for effective service delivery in the ECE centres.

The Ghana National Association of Teachers in collaboration with the Danish ECE Educators Association innovated a program dubbed 'train the teacher to train the child'. The aim of the program was to give adequate skills and training to care givers in both private and public ECE centres and unionise them. The project covered six out of eight regions in Ghana. The association organises workshops for care givers and government departments and agencies involved in ECE. It also develops materials for teacher improvement to help children develop holistically (ADEA, 2009). Kenya has attempted to emulate this by mounting workshops and in-service courses for ECE teachers through the Ministry of Education. Efforts to sensitise other ECE stakeholders by the DICECE officers has not yielded much due to inadequacy of resources.

Kenya, Ghana and South Africa have made tremendous effort to build the capacity of the ECE teachers and care givers at various levels by opening up training opportunities. The in-service training and workshops to untrained teachers has helped many ECE teachers improve their skills and knowledge give that the teacher is a key determinant of quality of services provided. However, without proper motivation of these teachers and a scheme of service for them, very little is likely to be realized.

A regional conference on ECD held in Mombasa in 2002 recognized the important role played by teachers and caregivers. However the conference pointed out that teacher motivation was still wanting given that teachers had no single employer and they worked under very poor terms and conditions of service. The conference therefore recommended that ECD teachers be under a single employer, and their terms and conditions of service developed and implemented in view of the important work they do (KIE, 2002). This was backed up in 2007 when a motion was passed in parliament to introduce a bill to amend the Education Act so as to provide for training and hiring of ECE teachers in all public nursery schools by the government through TSC (RoK, 2007). However the motion has never been discussed, an indication that the government has low priority for ECE. Republic of Kenya (2005) KESSP report revealed that there was high turnover rate of ECE teachers due to poor remuneration and lack of support from key stakeholders.

To enable ECD teachers to practice what they have learned in training, a strategy must be found to mitigate parental pressure on teachers to "teach" children in literacy and numeracy skills. Advocacy is essential to inform

parents about the positive impact of ECE pedagogy, especially its effectiveness in preparing children for formal schooling. It can be conducted effectively through, for example, mass media and *barazas* (community meetings). Such a campaign will require the use of empirical research results or concrete evidence demonstrating the value of the ECE pedagogy for both child development and preparation for formal schooling. Without using concrete evidence, it will be difficult to convince the parents as well as teachers that play is the best medium through which young children develop, learn and prepare for their future (UNESCO, 2005).

Problem statement

The environment in which a child is brought up plays a crucial role in its holistic development. Ages 3-6 years is a very critical age in a child's educational life when its intellectual capacity is not fully developed to think in an abstract way. The child therefore requires specialized materials, facilities and instructors to help him/her develop his/her full conceptual potential. Early Childhood Education program is supported by various stakeholders who provide finances and other resources to this sub-sector of education. There is currently high demand for ECE services and so do the teachers. Among the requirement is that ECE teachers must have a minimum qualification of a certificate in ECE to qualify to teach at the centres. UNESCO (2005) notes that ECE teachers require a minimum of 2 years training from either a government institution or a private institution accredited by the government. This then require that all stakeholders take a lead in ensuring that teachers are equipped with relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for teaching the children. The government through the Ministry of Education has developed policies guideline to enhance service delivery at this level including teachers and care takers trainings. Given that professional development is key to quality programme delivery at the ECE centres, the study intends to investigate this in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Objective

1. To establish the gender of the ECE teachers in Kakamega county
2. To determine academic qualification of ECE teachers in Kakamega county
3. To establish the influence of the stakeholders in the professional development of ECE teachers in Kakamega County, Kenya.

The focus of the study was both the public and private ECE centres in Kakamega County. The study respondents were delimited to ECE teachers, head teachers, DICECE Officers and the Education Office at the sub-county level. The ECE children, their parents, primary school pupils and teachers were excluded from the study.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the role of stakeholders in professional development of ECE teachers in Kakamega County. The design was appropriate for this study as it helped establish the nature, the state and the current condition of a phenomenon (Enon, 1998). It also described, recorded, analyzed and interpreted relationships or conditions as they exist without manipulating variables (Kothari, 2003). The design enabled rapid collection of data from a representative sample population and generalization of the results beyond the given sample (Cohen & Manion, 1980). This is because the sample was selected in a way that represented the population. Since the goal of the researcher was to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, then this design was an appropriate tool for collecting the information (Polland, 2005).

Location of the Study

The location of the study was Kakamega County, one of the forty seven counties in Kenya with 11 administrative Sub-Counties. The county was zoned into three regions. Lugari region covered Likuyani, Lugari and Matete Sub-Counties. Mumias region covered Mumias, Matungu, Butere and Kwisero Sub-Counties while Kakamega region covered Kakamega Central, Kakamega South, Kakamega East and Kakamega North Sub-Counties. The area was selected for study because of the diversity of the County in terms of existence of urban and rural settings, a variety of socio-economic activities as well as being the largest County in Western region and the second largest County of Kenya. The poverty levels are high with 58 % of the County's population living below poverty lines. The location was easily accessible to the researcher.

Target Population and sample size

The study targeted all the 1,820 (950 public and 870 private) ECE centres in the County. These ECE centres had a total of 1,820 head teachers and 3571 teachers. All the 11 DEOs and 11 DICECE Officers in the County were also targeted for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 Sub-Counties in the County to participate in the study which was approximately 30 % of the population (O'Connor, 2011). The sub-counties had both rural and urban settings therefore giving a variety of cases for comparison purposes. Three sub-counties with this dichotomy were Kakamega Central, Mumias and Likuyani. Kakamega Central sub-county represented the

Kakamega region which had four districts in total. From the Lugari region which covered three sub-counties, Likuyani sub-county was selected. Mumias sub-county on the other hand represented the Mumias region which has four sub-counties.

Proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select the participating ECE from the selected sub-counties. Thirty percent (30 %) of the public and private ECEs were selected to give Kakamega central with 61 public and 64 private ECEs a total of 18 and 19 ECEs respectively. Likuyani which had 60 public and 190 private ECEs provided a total of 18 and 57 public and private ECEs respectively. Mumias with 85 public and 152 private ECEs provided 26 and 46 ECEs respectively. This resulted into 62 public and 122 private ECEs participating in the study. Head teachers from each ECE participated in the study making a total of 62 and 122 head teachers from private and public ECE respectively. One teacher from the sampled ECE participated in the study. However where more than one teacher was found in an ECE centre, simple random sampling through balloting was used to select the one to participate. The DEOs and DICECE Officers of the selected sub-counties were selected purposively to participate in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using structured questionnaires and Interview Schedule. Questionnaires are convenient to handle as they can be left behind to give the respondent adequate time for filling. Questionnaires were used as they are time saving, confidential and there is no opportunity for interviewee bias (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Questionnaires were used to collect data from the head teacher and ECE teachers. Interview Schedule was used to collect data from the DEOs and the District DICECE officers to give in-depth information. The interview method enabled the researcher to obtain more detailed information and control the respondent in the right direction (Kothari, 2003). Interviews also made it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study hence increasing precision (Kerlinger, 1973). Questionnaires and interview schedules were developed with guidance of experts in research methodology and the research supervisors.

Validity and reliability of the Instruments

Content validity was ensured by developing the instruments in such a way that all the concepts in the objectives were included in the instruments (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher sought experts' judgement from the experts in research methodology and the supervisors. They verified the adequacy in coverage of the topic and ensure the questions were logically arranged and all the aspects were well covered. This ensured the instruments yielded both face and content valid data. The same experts assisted in ensuring contrast and face validity. The instruments were piloted and the results used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaires. Split half method was used to calculate the correlation between the odds and evens. Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was then computed to determine how items correlated among themselves. The method reduced the time required to compute a reliability coefficient in other methods as well as result in a more conservative estimate of reliability. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was arrived at and accepted for use in this study as supports (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Data Collection Procedures and analysis

A permit from the National Council of Science and Technology and permission from the Office of the President, Provincial Administration to carry out the study were sought. The researcher got the names of the ECE centres from the DEOs offices from which the required sample was selected using stratified random sampling. The researcher then proceeded to the centres where she sought audience with the head teachers. The teachers and the head teachers were then issued with the questionnaires separately. The researcher then checked the questionnaires if they were fully filled. If not fully filled the corresponding respondent was requested to fill the gaps as the researcher waited. This procedure took a maximum of two hours in a centre and proceeded until all the sampled centres were covered. This ensured 100% return rate as the researcher left with all the required data.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data was edited, organized in line with demographic aspects, groups and research questions and coded accordingly. The core function of coding was to create codes and scale from the responses which could be summarized and analyzed in various ways (Tromp, 2006). Qualitative data was organized in themes and reported using textual presentation. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Findings were presented in frequency tables, charts and graphs. Gay (2003) observes that frequencies and percentages easily communicate the research findings to majority of readers.

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents that were investigated were gender and teaching experience of the head teachers and the teachers. These characteristics were deemed important to the study as they helped the researcher understand the study subjects.

Gender of respondents

The first characteristic investigated was the gender of the respondents. The distribution of the sampled head teachers and teachers by gender were as indicated on Table 1. The Table shows that there was gender disparity among the teaching staff of ECE with majority being females at 92.3% as compared to 8.7% for males. This finding is in agreement with Chepngetich (2007) and Kombo and Gogo (2004) who observed that ECE teaching was more female oriented than male, attributing this to the special role women play in ECE. The low participation of males in this profession is attributed to the belief that women are better ECE teachers as articulated by Froebel (Nasibi, 2005) and Jean Rousseau (Begi & Koech, 2010). The nature of the work in ECE centres mainly entails mothering children which is better done by women than men. However, the scenario was different for the head teachers as majority of them were males at 57.6% as compared to 42.4% for females. Management entails extra responsibilities. Women should be encouraged to take up these responsibilities. The disparities may also be as a result of disproportional academic achievements between males and females where boys tend to outshine the girls at both primary and secondary levels as evidenced in the national examinations. This minimises the proportion of women who are able to access higher training and by extension, management positions. The findings are supported by Achoka et al (2012) who observed that there existed gender disparities in institutional management with fewer females taking-up these positions with higher responsibilities. The 42.4 % women who were in management positions however surpassed the 30% threshold as stipulated by the Kenyan constitution. However as much as there were more males in management, in the overall, females dominated the ECE sector as reported by 66.8% of the respondents.

Teaching experiences

Data was further solicited from both the teachers and the head teachers on their teaching experience and the results were as indicated on Table 2. The findings on Table 2 show that majority of the teachers had a teaching experience of between 8-10 years as reported by 58.2% of the teachers, with only 2.2% having an experience of less than 2 years. This implies that they had the skills, knowledge and experience for implementing the ECE program. The study further indicated that there were more head teachers with a teaching experience of more than 10 years at 79.3%. Only 1.6% had a teaching experience of less than 2 years. This implies that appointment to headship is based on teachers' teaching experience. This may be deemed as an important attribute as the head teachers may have the capacity and the relevant experience to handle teaching and management issues of the centres. These findings are in agreement with Senate (1996) who reiterated that most ECE teachers in Australia are highly experienced with in-depth practical knowledge about teaching young children. Further, Gakii (2003) observed that the more experienced ECE were likely to have positive relationships with their pre-school children as compared to those who are less experienced. Less experienced teachers were likely to use punishment as a tool for disciplining the child.

Role of Stakeholders in the Professional Development of Teachers in ECE Centres

To establish the role played by stakeholders in professional development of teachers and head teachers, the respondents were asked to respond to a number of items related to their professional development. These included their professional qualifications, how their education and training was financed, training institutions and courses they attended.

Teachers were asked to indicate their professional qualifications. The results were summarized on Table 3. Findings on Table 3 reveal that a majority of the teachers (70.1%) were holders of a certificate in ECE. This is an indication that most teachers met the minimum requirements for teaching ECE children as stipulated in the ECDE policy guideline (ROK, 2006). The study further indicated that all the respondents had undertaken some form of professional development. Early Childhood Education further attracted university graduates as reported by 2.2% of the respondents. This is a clear show that ECE is attracting people with university qualifications contrary to Kombo & Gogo (2004) and Thomson et al (2009) who reported that ECE is characterized by large numbers of untrained teachers. Eric (2002) had reported similar findings that many ECE teachers enter the field

with little education beyond high school and minimal specialized education in ECE. However this scenario seems to be changing rapidly.

Financing Teacher Training

Respondents were further asked to indicate who financed their training. The responses were as presented on Table 4. The results on Table 4 indicate that despite a majority of the respondents undertaking their training in government institutions, the government played a minimum role in subsidizing their training costs. A large percentage of respondents had their training costs met by themselves as reported by 63% and 80.4 % of the head teachers and teachers respectively. The Government had supported a paltry 12% of the head teachers and 7.1% of the teachers respectively. Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organisations also played a role in financing teacher training as reported by 1.6% and 3.8% of head teachers and teachers respectively. This is an indication that all the ECE stakeholders have made a contribution in some way towards financing teacher training in Kenya. Other sub-sectors of education are reasonably funded towards teacher training in terms of bursaries, higher education loans, CDF and government subsidies like the infrastructure fund which is not the case with the ECE sub-sector.

Training Institutions Attended by ECE Teachers

Respondents were further asked to indicate the institutions in which they undertook their training. Their responses were as shown on Table 5. The results on table 5 indicates that majority of the trained teachers (57.6%) were trained in government institutions as opposed to 42.4% who trained in private institutions. Faith-based organizations played a minimal role in capacity developing of ECE teachers as outlined in the national ECD policy framework. Capacity building of teachers should be carried by all the stakeholders like the government, FBO, private sectors and Non-governmental organizations (ROK, 2006).

Teachers' Professional Development

Questions on teachers' professional development were asked to the teachers and their responses were summarized on Table 6. A five point Likert scale was used, Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (U), Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A).

The first three items sought to investigate the role of the Ministry of Education in teachers' professional development among the ECEs. The findings indicated that majority of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed that there were opportunities for professional development provided by the Ministry of Education as reported by 50.5% and 30.4 % of teachers respectively. This is confirmed by UNESCO (2005) which indicated that there are more training opportunities in both government and private training institutions including higher institutions of learning.

When asked whether the ministry of education had clear policy guidelines on professional development of ECE teachers' majority of the teachers strongly agreed (35.9%) and agreed (30.4 %) on this. The findings are supported by RoK (2006a) which states that the government is charged with formulation and implementation of policy guidelines on capacity building of ECE personnel.

On whether the ministry promotes ECE teacher development courses, a paltry of 13 % and 13.6 % strongly agreed and agreed respectively. The results are a true reflection of the minimal role played by the government through the MoE in teacher development at ECE level. In other sub-sectors of education, the MoE organizes and funds teachers' development courses like SMASSE and SMASE in both primary and secondary schools. Despite opening doors to training opportunities in government DICECE centres in the country, majority of the teachers were yet to access these opportunities due to selection criteria (RoK, 2005). However there existed a lot of training opportunities in private and church sponsored training institutions whose selection qualification was only based on minimum qualification and ability to pay the required levies (UNESCO, 2005). This means that fresh secondary school graduates can only access the training opportunities in private training institutions while those in government DICECE must have served/ be serving in a public ECE centre for a period not less than two years (RoK, 2006b). Government funding is also limited to the government training institutions which are few

compared to the higher demand for training by teachers (RoK, 2005). This hinders majority of the ECE teachers from enhancing their professionalism.

The next three items sought teachers' views on the role of the ECE centres on teachers' professional development. Almost an equal number of teachers agreed (48.9%) and disagreed (44.0%) on the issue of the ECE centres having clear guidelines on professional development of teachers. However, some ECE centres supported teachers by paying for their attendance to workshops and seminars, as observed from 58.2 % of the teachers who agreed with this. Responses on whether teachers were sent for workshop by the centre administration whenever there was one shows contentment among the teachers as reported by an equal number of teachers strongly agreeing (30.4%) and agreeing (30.4%). Despite the financial constraints on the ECE centres, the institutions were keen on building the capacity of their teachers which is important in improving the quality of service for ECE children. The findings are contrary to UNESCO (2005) who reported that teachers from private centres were not given leave to attend workshops organized by DICECE officers. Continuous professional development places the ECE teachers in a better position to progress in their area of specialization and to offer quality services to their clients. During these workshops teachers are sensitized on the new developments in their areas of specialization as well as having their skills are sharpened and updated. Supporting ECE teacher training was a sign that the centre management were ready to embrace new trends in education and was keen on improving the quality of services in the sub-sector.

The third category of items sought to establish ECE teachers' own initiative in supporting their professional development. They were asked whether they took their own initiative to develop themselves professionally. It came out that majority of the teachers did take an active role to develop themselves professionally as reported by 76.7 % of the teachers who contributed to their professional development. It is therefore clear that the teachers were keen on updating their professional skills since they took a leading role in providing financial resources for their own training. The Ministry of Education has indeed made some efforts to empower the teachers' by organizing in service workshops for ECE teachers. The findings are contrary to Bowman, (1993) who observed that at the current rate additional training cannot be paid for by the practitioners themselves making some form of public support for training teachers of small children necessary. Professional development impacts positively on the quality of service delivered at the ECE centers.

The next item sought teachers' views on the role of parents, NGOs and other stakeholders in the teachers' professional development. The teachers were asked to indicate whether parents with children in ECE centres contributed funds towards teacher development. Only 30.9 % agreed with this while 65.8% of the respondents disagreed. This implied that the major stakeholders in ECE did not contribute towards teacher' professional development as much of their support was used for teachers' salaries. However from the earlier findings, it was established that parents were already overburdened with other levies supporting both recurrent and development expenditures in the ECEs. Majority (29.3% and 35.9 %) of the teachers agreed and strongly disagreed on the issue of Non- Governmental Organizations and other development partners taking charge of teacher development in their centres.

Opinion of teachers was sought on ways of improving their professional development. From their responses, 69.7 % of the teachers indicated that the government should take a leading role in ECE teacher development and organize more in-service training courses. Majority (62.5 %) of the teachers were of the opinion that the government develops a clear policy on teacher professional development and implement so as to improve on the skills of the ECE teachers. This should involve all the ECE stakeholders for ownership and effectiveness. The issue of funding teacher professional development was also raised by 89.2 % of the teachers who felt that the ECE sub-sector should be given the same treatment as that given to primary and secondary schools where the MoE funds teachers' professional development.

Majority (57.2 %) of the teachers also raised the need to deploy more DICECE trainers at the district level so as to reach out to all the teachers and mount more workshops and in-service training courses at the district levels. Bowman (1993) puts emphasis on teacher training as it improves the flexibility with which teachers respond to children. In order for teachers to implement programs based on developmentally appropriate practices, there is need for considerable efforts and money to be invested in the teacher training. This will improve the skills of the work force in handling the small children under their care. The findings cite the teachers as the main source of finances for their professional development as other stakeholders watch from the fence. The ministry of education has provided the opportunities for teacher professional development by expanding the training

institutions and putting the policy framework on professional development in place RoK (2006). However MoE has ignored funding of teacher professional development leaving it to the teachers and the ECE centres.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that females (as indicated by 92.3% of the teachers) dominated the ECE teaching profession. With respect to their professional qualification, the study concluded that majority of that ECE teachers met minimum qualification of at least a certificate in ECDE(as indicated by 70.1% of teachers) to teacher in the ECE centres with a noticeable number of teachers (2.2%) having Degrees in early childhood education. In relation to the role of stakeholders in professional development of teachers in ECE centres the study findings revealed that stakeholders influence on professional development of ECE teachers was negligible. Both head teachers and teachers met the cost of their professional development as indicated by 80.4 % and 63 % of the teachers and head teachers respectively. However Early Childhood Education teachers had met minimum professional qualification of ECE teachers. Through their own efforts, a significant number of these teachers from both private and public ECE centres had certificates in ECE from licensed training institutions. The government through the Ministry of Education played the role of policy formulation putting clear policies on professional development in place for ECE teachers. Early childhood education teachers attended professional development courses regularly as indicated by 80.4 % of the ECE teachers. The ECE centre managements supported and paid for their teaching staff to attend professional development courses.

Recommendation

The research recommended that stakeholders should provide incentives to males who train and teach in ECE centres to attract and retain them so that they can provide a male role model to the children and close the gender gap that exist in the subsector. Early childhood education teachers should be employed by the government since most of them have the required professional qualification to teach in the centres. Finally, the government should expand the scholarship programs to cover ECE pupils and teacher trainees. Stakeholders should set resources aside for teachers' professional development.

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Table 1: Gender of the respondents:

Gender	Teachers		Head teachers	
	f	%	f	%
Males	16	8.7	106	57.6
Females	168	92.3	78	42.4
Totals	184	100.0	184	100.0

Table 2: Teaching experience of the respondents

Teaching experience	Head teachers		Teachers	
	F	%	f	%
Less than 2 years	3	1.6	4	2.2
2-4 years	6	3.3	18	9.8
5-7 years	20	10.9	36	19.6
8-10 years	9	4.9	107	58.2
10 years and above	146	79.3	19	10.3
Totals	184	100	184	100

Table 3: Teachers' Professional Qualifications

Professional course	Teachers	
	f	%
Certificate in ECE	129	70.1
Diploma in ECE	46	25
Degree in ECE	4	2.2
P1	2	1.1
P1 and Diploma in ECE	2	1.1
Others	1	0.5
Totals	184	100

Table 4: Financing of teachers' training

Stakeholders	Head teachers		Teachers	
	f.	%	f	%
Parents/ Guardian	35	19.0	16	8.7
Government	22	12.0	13	7.1
Self	116	63.0	148	80.4
NGO/ CBO	03	1.6	07	3.8
Untrained	08	4.3	00	00
Totals	184	100	184	100

Table 5: Training institution

Institution category	Teachers	
	Freq.	%
Government	106	57.6
Private	78	42.4
Totals	184	100

Table 6: Teachers' Professional Development

Professional development	N	SA	A	U	D	SD
		%	%	%	%	%
There are opportunities for professional development in ECE in Kenya	182	50.5	30.4	3.3	4.9	10.9
The Ministry of Education has clear policy guidelines on professional development of ECE teachers	180	36.9	30.4	2.2	13.6	17.9
The ministry promotes ECE teacher development courses I have attended	183	13	13.6	1.6	47.3	24.5
My centre has clear guidelines on professional development of teachers	184	21.7	27.2	7.1	21.2	22.8
My centre supports teachers by paying for attendance to workshops and seminars on ECE	180	20.7	37.5	6.0	13.5	22.3
Whenever there is a workshop my centre allows ECE teachers to attend.	184	30.4	30.4	3.8	10.9	24.5
I take my own initiative to develop myself professionally	184	33.2	43.5	1.0	10.9	11.4
I pay for my professional development courses	183	39.1	35.3	00	10.9	14.7
I regularly attend professional courses	184	47.3	33.1	2.2	6.5	10.9
Parents of the centre pay some money towards teacher development	182	10.8	20.1	3.3	35.9	29.9
NGO and other development partners take charge of teacher development in my centre	180	6.0	25.5	3.3	29.3	35.9

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